Volume 3 Chicago, Illinois, August, 1926 Number 5

# The Liberal

## *VACATION THOUGHTS*

*"God of the open air,*
*Thou who hast made thy dwelling fair*
*With flowers below, above with starry lights,*
*And set thine altars everywhere;*
*To Thee I turn, to Thee I make my prayer,*
*God of the open air."*

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# THE LIBERAL

Preston Bradley ..... Editor
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Volume 3 Chicago, Illinois, August, 1926 Number 5

## *THE CRYING NEED OF A RENEWED CHRISTIANITY*

**By Charles W. Eliot, President Emeritus Harvard University.**

**An Address Delivered Under the Auspices of the Unitarian Churches of Philadelphia.**

This meeting is held under the auspices of three Christian Churches of a peculiar sort, belonging to a small denomination called Unitarian,—peculiar in that they have no ecclesiastical organization in the ordinary sense, and also no creed or body of dogmas which members of such churches must accept, or are supposed to accept. Every church in this peculiar body is independent, and, like the church of the Plymouth Pilgrims, chooses its own minister, enters, if possible, into such fellowship as it pleases with other churches, and decides for itself upon the charitable, educational and social work it proposes to carry on. The denomination stands for complete religious liberty, for a respectful attitude towards all sincere religious beliefs—Christian or other—and for judging every religion by the amount of genuine twentieth-century ethics which finds place in it. This peculiar church invites serious and candid people to unite, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, for the worship of God and the service of Man, but leaves entirely to the individual the decision whether he shall join a church or not. No rite bars the way into this church, no baptism, confirmation, or examination, and no one enters it in hope of reward or out of fear of punishment.

The great churches of Christendom all possess powerful ecclesiastical organizations, and bodies of doctrine which are supposed to contain already the whole of essential religious truth, and to be unchangeable from age to age, except as the ecclesiastical bodies which govern the respective churches choose to make additions, or to issue new interpretations. All the great Christian churches have instituted rites, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, and observances which they require their members to accept, attend, or perform, particularly those relating to birth, marriage, and death, the great events in every human life. The creeds and dogmas of these churches contain many conceptions which are not arrived at or deduced by any reasoning process but are mere products of the human imagination which are accepted by a mysterious intuition or insight with which neither inductive nor deductive reasoning has anything to do. The Unitarian Churches reject irrational piety, while maintaining to the full wonder, reverence, and awe.

It is a fitting time, therefore, in which to seek the reasons for the inefficiency of the great Christian churches in promoting the moral and physical welfare of mankind on this earth, whatever they may claim to do in respect to human happiness in another. The first explanation is that institutional Christianity departed early from the teachings of the founder of the religion, and copied in its structure the authoritative and hierarchical arrangements, and

in its doctrine the materialism of the Roman world. There emerged from the early centuries after Christ two despotic churches, each of which undertook to rule the minds and hearts of men, and did rule for many centuries the masses of the European peoples. The Protestant Reformation made a serious breach in the Roman Church, and brought in some new liberty—civil as well as religious—but Protestantism remained a highly authoritative religion; for within well-organized Protestant denominations the authority of the inspired Bible replaced for the common people the authority of the Roman hierarchy, the authoritative interpretation of the Bible being supplied by small groups of men learned in the theology of the times. Not till the Pilgrims set up in Plymouth their Free Church in their Free State, did the Christian world contain a fairly successful example of instituted civil and religious liberty. The Pilgrim Church and State set up standards of which America, at least, has never lost sight; but within seventy-five years many of the Pilgrims' liberties were lost or impaired; so that the compact signed in the cabin of the Mayflower, and John Robinson's doctrine that more light and truth were still to break forth from God's Word, became little more than a precious and fragrant memory.

The first explanation, then, of the impotency of the Christian churches as regards the prevention of war is that they were all organized with too much authority and too little liberty in them. They never believed in God's way of developing the best and most effective human character—the way of liberty to sin, in order to the development of self-control. The Christian ascetics avoided fleshly temptation by mortifying the flesh; the monks and nuns fled from the world altogether. The first duties of the common people in religion were obedience to the priest and the observance of the rites the priest prescribed. Men and women should be compelled to believe whatever the Church dictated, and should be held to the authorized beliefs and practices of the church by custom, tradition, and hallowed associations. The churches have not relied on the essential dignity of human nature and the human love of freedom for the uplifting of the race, but, on the contrary, on man's tendency to sin and his fear of the consequences, and on his too-frequent degradation in this world and his hope of salvation in another,—a salvation obtainable only through the vicegerents of God on earth. Not believing in liberty, the churches have habitually supported autocratic government, and that climax of autocracy—military discipline for purposes of conquest.

The second explanation of the impotency of the Christian churches to prevent war, or promote peace, is to be found in the unethical quality of some of the doctrines of the Christian churches, as crystallized in their dogmas and creeds. The official creeds of the great churches of Christianity, and many parts of the Scriptures contain conceptions of God's nature and of His action toward the human race which are intolerable to the ethical mind of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The creeds of the evangelical churches are, as a rule, built on the "fall of man" as described in the story of the Garden of Eden, the absolute correctness or trustworthiness of the story itself being assumed on the ground that its author was inspired by God himself. The conduct attributed to God in that story would be wholly unworthy of any man whose standards of conduct accorded with the average sentiments about right and wrong of civilized people today. God in that story is unjust, mean, and cruel; yet the story, taken as a narrative of facts, has been made the foundation of the official creeds of all the great Christian churches.

Man fell from a superior state

of innocency into a condition of sin and misery. Nevertheless, he peopled the earth with creatures like himself, degraded and wretched. But this result was unsatisfactory even to barbarous ages, when considered as the work of God, and means of redemption and ultimate salvation had to be devised and formulated. Hence came the practice of propitiation or expiation by sacrifices —human sacrifices at first in Israel, but later burnt offerings of beasts and birds; and finally the Christian church discovered in the scriptures a vicarious atonement for the sins of the world by the Son of God, incarnated for a brief residence on this atom of an earth, in this insignificant solar system among the countless myriads of celestial bodies. The Lamb of God was sacrificed for the sins of the world; and so some small proportion of the human race was rescued from eternal torment to justify by their eternal happiness, so far as they might, the original creation of a feeble race tricked into sin. The creeds of the great churches differ as to the proportion of the race really rescued by the vicarious atonement through Jesus Christ; but they all agree in making this vicarious atonement necessary to the salvation of any proportion of the human race.

In these days, the whole conception of one being—human or divine—suffering, though innocent, for the sins of another, or of innumerable others, is revolting to the universal sense of justice and fair dealing. No family, no school, and no court would venture to punish the innocent, when the guilty were known, in order that the guilty might escape punishment. Any human father would be outraged by the suggestion that he had ever dealt, or could so deal with his children; and yet every member of the great Christian churches is supposed to believe that God deals in that way with the human race; and that the victim offered up for the redemption of a portion of the human race was, in a peculiar sense, the son of God. How incredible it is, that the religious institutions and doctrines, which resulted from the perversions of the real teachings of Jesus by the pagan world, should have been so completely and fundamentally inconsistent with the ethics of those teachings!

Before the Christian churches can be expected to be efficient in the promotion of human welfare, and particularly in the bringing of peace on earth, they must purge themselves of such doctrines as these. It is not enough to say in defense of the churches good standing no longer believe these shocking doctrines; they should be eliminated from the published standards and confessions of the churches.

The historical Christian churches were early made partners with empires, monarchies, and baronies, in the control and oppression of the masses of mankind, and, the governments being maintained by force, the churches became, in general, supporters of the military regime. This was natural enough, because the God of the Christian churches, like Israel's God, was commonly thought of as Lord of Hosts, God of Battles, Successful Invader, and Glorious Conqueror. These martial attributes of God were described with glowing fervor in the litanies, ascriptions, and thanksgivings of the churches. Joshua's God was the most ruthless of destroyers. Not so destructive, however, as the German Emperor's God today; because he evidently lacked the power to destroy everything that he wished to destroy: "And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Some of the Canaanites successfully resisted the Lord of the Israelite hosts; but in these later days the Belgians could not successfully resist the Lord of the German hosts. This conception of God is hideous, cruel, and insane; and

no Christian church which tolerates it can be efficient in the promotion of human welfare and happiness.

Not only is the God of the great Christian churches often a War God, but the Christian life itself is often represented in Christian hymn and preachings as a battle. The Christian fights against Satan and the powers of evil,—he goes forth to war against the evils and wrongs of his day: "The Son of God goes forth to war, a kingly crown to gain"—meanest of motives. The saint wears armor, the armor of the mediaeval battlefield, and the archangels and the knights set upon the dragons and fiends, and slay them with swords. A large part of the imagery of Christian literature is drawn from the work of soldiers and armies. "Onward Christian soldiers, maching as to war" is today one of the favorite hymns of the Protestant churches. In the annual procession of the Corpus Christi in Vienna, three bodies take common part, each with great magnificence, — the court, the army, and the church. This is the habitual association which has gradually undermined the capacity of the Church to advance in modern Europe the cause of justice, mercy, and liberty, and hence of peace and good-will.

The Christian nations have, however, attained since the middle ages to a civilization which seems to modern men in Christian lands higher than that of the non-Christian nations, except in the prevalence of international war and fighting in general. For at least six hundred years the Christian nations have fought oftener and harder than the so-called heathen. Within the past two centuries all the great wars have been fought on Christian soil by Christian soldiers. This recognized superiority in general civilization, however, is not chiefly due to the churches, but to other influences. The chief beneficial result of the Crusades was a remarkable development of Mediterranean commerce between the East and the West. The period which we call the Renaissance was the period of a remarkable revival of classical learning, and particularly of the Greek literature. The discovery of America brought about an immense increase of commercial adventure and of Occidental wealth; while the religious enthusiasm which accompanied the discovery was the source of hideous cruelties and barbarities. The Reformation was not a normal product of the Roman Church but a rebellion and schism within that church, one consequence of which was an increase of civil and religious liberty in Europe. In the eighteenth century began the great series of scientific discoveries due to the adoption and successful use of the inductive philosophy and method; and for the last one hundred and fifty years it has been natural and physical science which has been the main contributor to the increasing material welfare of mankind. Science has won its way in spite of the opposition of the principal Christian churches; and that opposition did not cease until within the memory of men now living; indeed, it still breaks out from time to time. And now, within the last five months, the worst War of all recorded time,—worst because of its wide extent, the fury with which it is prosecuted, and the destructive power of its new implements,—brings unheard-of-misery upon the human race; and the Christian churches are helpless to prevent it, or even to mitigate its horrors. The effective organizations for such pitifully small relief as can be given are for the most part not religious but secular. The care of the wounded falls on men and women trained in natural and physical science, and possessing manual skill and the spirit of service. The effective works of mercy are performed, not chiefly by representatives of the churches or by religious partisans and zealots, but by men and women who understand how to get food

to the starving, to bring first-aid to the wounded and carry them quickly to hospitals, to prevent fevers and infections, to purify water supplies, and to treat lock-jaw, gangrene, and frostbite. The effective advocates of peace and good-will among men in this horrible convulsion, produced by a nation which believes in discipline, ruthless force, and the domination of the strong over the weak, are not the priests and ministers of traditional Christianity, or the performers of rites and ceremonies, but the teachers of public liberty as the indispensable source of the highest efficiency in individual or nation, and of public justice and righteousness developed under free governmental institutions which train men to self-control in freedom under law.

The great European War is fundamentally a conflict between freedom and democracy on the one side, and the rule of hereditary monarchs and a military class on the other, that rule being maintained by appeals to love of country and national pride, and enforced by a stern discipline which leaves nothing of liberty to the individual. In this strife the Christian Church as a whole is divided, each national church supporting its own nation; and by inheritance and tradition each national church supports the war-making power, no matter how cruel, deceitful and faithless that power may prove to be. In short, the established and conventional churches manifest little power to promote either love to God or love to the neighbor.

Is this ineffective condition the final issue of the teachings of Jesus Christ, or is it only the result of the structure of the institutions, and the quality of the doctrines in which those teachings have been embodied and set forth? To this question a great many men in all the nations of Europe and America reply that such a discussion has no interest for them; that they have not only rejected the traditional dogmas of established Christianity, but that they have no interest in discussing them; that the vital movements of the human spirit have taken more promising directions; and that they are concerned not with the Christian churches, but with the new powers which make for liberty, enlightenment, and progress. Multitudes of these men say that they are ready for any sort of social service; and at this moment multitudes of them in France and England are showing by their voluntary acts that they are ready to suffer and die in the cause of freedom; while other multitudes, equal in number, permit themselves to be driven to wounds and death in the cause of effective discipline, force, and domination. On both sides, millions of men are exhibiting extraordinary self-sacrifice and devotion, natural fruits of the spirit of Jesus Christ; but most of these heroes have not consciously derived these lofty sentiments from the Christian churches, but are moved by the common loves of family, home, and country.

For two generations the men that have been doing, and are now doing the work of the world have, in large measure, withdrawn from the organized churches, or maintain but a nominal connection with them,—a connection, however, which often includes considerable payments to the churches on behalf of their wives and children. Educated men as a rule, in both Europe and America, have ceased to be influenced in their opinions or their actions by the dogmas of the churches, by the rewards churches offer, or by the punishments they threaten. Sunday has become a day for physical rest, for outdoor refreshment, for attention to the family, or for the enjoyment of music—sometimes at the church, but oftener at the club, the park, or the concert hall. With trifling exceptions, the church is no longer the centre of social recognition, or of social enjoyments for the multitude. The

granges and trades-unions, the neighborhood houses, and the numerous beneficial societies provide in many communities the needed opportunities for social intercourse which church meetings used to provide. In former times the Christian churches were the almoners for the poor and desolate; and the chief works of mercy were carried on by men and women especially commissioned by the Christian Church. Now, secular societies, administered by laymen, carry on many of the principal movements for the improvement of society,—such as the Civil Service Reform Leagues, the Playground Association, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and the Associations for Baby, School, Social and Mental Hygiene; and many of the hospitals, dispensaries and asylums, whether supported by taxation or by the voluntary contributions of public-spirited persons, are the works of people whose motive-power is not derived from churches. To be sure, many churches have, of late, taken up some kinds of social work; but in such labors the churches are as a rule less effective than the lay societies. Even in its function of teaching children what religion is what right conduct is, and what the motives are which lead to right conduct, the Church has much to learn. The Sunday School does not compare favorably in method or results with the week-day school even as a teacher of elementary ethics; for it often lacks sound methods, adequate time, and the support of parents.

The fundamental trouble is that the Christian churches, as instituted and organized, have relied for centuries on imposed beliefs, rites, sacraments, symbols, and observances. Since the latter years of the eighteenth century, it has become more and more difficult to impose beliefs on educated people; and intelligent men have steadfastly lost faith in mysticism, symbolism, and sacerdotalism, and have come to rely more and more on the careful ascertainment of facts, the human reason, and the natural sentiments of reverence and love. They have also come to prefer for themselves and their families liberty, independence, and public order founded on agreed-upon law, to obedience, submission, and order founded on discipline administered to the many by the few. With these new tendencies of the human spirit the great Christian churches are not in full accord.

The great Christian churches have always supported the claim of absolute monarchs that they rule by Divine right; but in the modern world only ignorant or archaic persons accept that doctrine. The mystic has always believed that in some unimaginable way he is the recipient, on occasion, of direct revelations from God through faculties or means of perception in himself which are instinctive rather than reasonable; but the advance in man's knowledge of nature, and in his power to apply to his own uses the natural forces, has made it harder than it used to be for an intelligent man to be a mystic. The thinking person who is enduring a life of suffering now, on this earth, is much less disposed than he used to be to accept as a real consolation another imagined life free from the struggles and pains of the present life. In other words, the consolations and hopes which the Christian churches have heretofore imparted to suffering human beings are today far less efficacious than they were in the first eighteen centuries. Neither the heaven nor the hell of the Christian churches appeals to the modern man as it formerly did to his predecessors.

The condition of Europe at this moment is the last and most convincing demonstration that the great churches of Christendom have lost their power to keep Man from sin, to guide him on an upward path, and to make him happy; for the churches are helpless in the presence of this

terrible mass of long-planned, elaborately contrived human sin, shame, and suffering, although the mass is shot through by splendid gleams of courage, self-sacrifice, and patriotic devotion.

The religious state of Christendom today is therefore in need of a genuine revival. Mankind needs to worship, needs incitements to love, reverence, and duty, and a happy spiritual conception of the universe. Without these helps, Man cannot possibly he happy in his family, his labor, or his social order. Without these conceptions of the finite and the infinite values, Man cannot rise in his nature or his life from bad to good, and from good to better. No single personality born in Christendom—and no class of persons—can reach his best without accepting as his guides in life the fundamental teachings of Jesus Christ—love God and the neighbor, have compassion on the wronged and the desolate, seek the truth that frees, and worship God in spirit and in truth. To live in this way, it is not necessary to accept any of the dogmas of the great churches, or any part of their symbolism or ritualism. Indeed, much of their symbolism, ritualism, dogmatism and ecclesiasticism is inconsistent with essential obedience to the percepts of Jesus Christ.

What then is the renewed Christianity which these terrible times we are living in cry out for in the midst of tears and heart-breaking sorrows? It is a Christianity which abandons the errors and the unjust, cruel conceptions which the centuries have piled up on the simple teachings of Jesus. It is a Christianity which sympathizes with and supports the aspirations of mankind for freedom,—freedom in thought, speech and action,—and completely abandons authoritative ecclesiasticism and governmental despotism. It is a Christianity which hallows and consecrates birth, marriage, the bringing up of children, family life, the earning of the livelihood, and death, and rejects all the aspersions on the natural life of Man which Christianity inherited from paganism and Judaism. It is a Christianity which will be the friend and ally of all that is good and ennobling in literature-science, and art, and will avail itself without fear of all the new means of teaching and helping men which successive generations shall discover, and of all the innocent enjoyments and social pleasures, while resisting effectively every unwholesome or degrading influence on human society. It is a Christianity which will recognize that the pursuit of happiness in this world is legitimate for every human being, and that the main function of government is to protect and further men in that pursuit by securing to the community health, education, wholesome productive labor and liberty.

Do you ask if there exist in the world any exemplars of this sort of Christianity? Fortunately for the future of the world there are to be found in nearly every Christian communion individuals who illustrate in their personal lives the purity and power of the simple religion taught by Jesus Christ. Many of these persons are quite unconscious of the embarrassments which the creeds, rituals, dogmas, and discipline of their respective churches would inflict on their candid minds, if they realized, or apprehended in clear and logical statements, the meaning of the traditional doctrines and rites of their churches. Finding themselves practically free to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God, they remain in the churches into which they were born, held there by family ties, sweet associations, or conservative sentiment, and inattentive to the inconsistencies between their life of the spirit and the historical doctrines of the churches to which they belong. They are all exemplars of the renewed Christianity of which there is such crying need; and many of them are active promoters of that renewal.

The liberal churches of Pro-

testantism are, however, the best exemplars of renewed Christianity; because they have definitely abandoned the official creeds and dogmas of the past, all ecclesiasticism, and almost all symbolism and ritualism. Their membership, modest in number and little disposed to proselytism, consists exclusively of persons who propose to be free, simple, and candid in their religious thought, and in all expressions of that thought. These independent churches lay the emphasis on character and conduct, and are concerned with the tendencies and practices of their members in daily action, rather than with the beliefs of their fellowship.

After all, true Christianity is not a body of doctrines, or an official organization to direct and control men's minds and wills. It is a way of life.

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## *"THE MINISTRY OF HOPE"*

**A Baccalauerate Sermon Delivered on Sept. 28, 1921 at the Meadville Theological School by Louis C. Cornish.**

And Jesus said unto Him, "Feed My Sheep."

Through the mists of centuries we read the closing incident of Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of John, the most imaginative and interpretative of the Gospel narratives. Peter and Thomas and Nathaniel and the sons of Zebedee and two unnamed disciples go fishing on the sea of Tiberius. In the early morning they behold Jesus standing upon the shore. Peter flings himself into the sea and swims, the others follow him in the boat. They find a fire, and fish cooking on the coals, and there in the open they sit together, silent for a time, and then the Master speaks to Peter. "Lovest thou me more than these?" And Peter answers, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." And Jesus says, "Feed my sheep." Again comes the question and the answer. "Lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." And once again, "Simon, lovest thou me?" "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep."

The test of discipleship, the test the Master applies to the disciple who is to serve him for a life-time, the test of reality stronger than the love of friends and all the duties of the day, is given in this command, this challenge, "Feed my sheep."

Take this incident as history, and many through the centuries have done so with a literalism that in essence is true to fact, or take the story as a poetic interpretation of the spirit of the Nazarene; take it in any way you will, but I beg you to ponder it, remember it, never forget it, use it as the very symbol of that ministry for which you have prepared and upon which you are now to enter. The Christ spirit of the ages speaks to you: the Christ spirit, which today is transcendently the hope of the world, now that your novitiate ends and your apostle's work begins, challenges you. Lovest thou me? And your answer, Yea, we love thee. Lovest thou me? Yea, we love thee. Lovest thou me? Yea, thou who hast trodden the ages under conquering feet, thou knowest that we love thee. Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep. Feed my sheep.

Can you feed men with hope? Will you feed them? Will you love to feed men better than you love all else? Here is the eternal test of discipleship. So will your devotion to the truth be proven. Again and again men will bring you to this holy examination, awful, almost unbearable in its power and quality. So men have tested the worth of the ministry

generation after generation. By this final examination they have accredited ministers as of supreme help to humanity, or condemned them as of no real account. There is only this one test alike for priest and for prophet. This is your challenge upon your graduation.

I speak to you with the authority of an ever growing purpose in the history of the race. Understand also that I speak in deep humility. When I look into your faces and realize who you are, I would gladly say to you, Reverend fathers in God and fellow-believers, teach me your wisdom. But you have bidden me here to testify. I would you could know with what hesitation I have come. Who am I, indeed, to instruct you or to exhort, you who stand in the white light of your youth and consecration, and you others who have poured into these minds not only the learning of the schools but the full measure of your own devotion. Yet withal, I am bold to testify out of my twenty-six years of active service in the Christian church, twenty-two year of it in the blessed service of our Unitarian Christianity.

I am to speak to you what I may of this stewardship of the mystery of hope. If what I believe is to be of value, perhaps you should know something of my arrival. Briefly, I have traveled the familiar path that leads out from a form of orthodox Christianity, over a long desert stretch where I could see no leading, across what Harriet Martineau describes as the breezy commons of the universe, and gradually there has come to me a deepening apprehension of the divine. I have seen men hope and I have seen hope justified.

You will ask what I mean. I am convinced that history reveals a development, and that this development can be translated into a purpose. Excluding other considerations, other phases of history, take just the religious development of man. Religion first shows itself in those savage beliefs where a gleam of wisdom and hope is discernible in the night of ignorance. Man becomes aware of an enfolding mystery, potent with influences which he fumbles to understand. Then through countless centuries and endless stages these beginnings have developed into the three great world faiths which now sway mankind. Differ as they may, these faiths agree in much that is essential. They all sense with reverence the infinite mysteries about us. All teach brotherliness. All sacrifice immediate concerns to distant good. All hold that the soul survives the body. All proclaim a soul development. Plainly they differ, obviously they are of varying value. But in them all is universal truth, the apprehension of the infinite mysteries in which we dwell, our kinship to these mysteries, and our higher destiny beyond the present life. Here is a common heritage of appreciation, a common human perception, of what forever will abide. Further, outside these historic developments of belief are many testimonies. This is especially true today. Our literature is full of utterances of pure belief in God and human destiny which can hardly be included in any traditional group. Such utterances testify to the underlying unity of religious experience, and they prophesy a universal apprehension of the divine that in future ages shall become the common faith of all mankind. In religion we deal with persistent universal phenomena.

The greatest interpreter, the clearest exponent of their meaning, is the Nazarene. He is far more than the fulfilment of tribal Messianic expectation, far more than the creedal Christ; he is the spokesman of truths greater than the world has comprehended. He is today the interpreter of the essential unity of the race, and of its high destiny, and of a purpose which is no less than the warp and woof of life. He is the symbol of a vast tide of hope and assurance in God that began yonder millions of years ago and flows forever onward.

Let us consider these phenomena in another way. Here is a kind of life, a Christ-like life, a life of brotherly affiliations and unselfish service, shot through with hope of the hereafter. This sort of life appears on the planet, continues, spreads, is rebuffed, is extinguished, but ever miraculously survives, is ever nailed on the world's calvaries, and yet ever again by the very power of its crucifixion returns in triumph. It is something immeasurably vaster than any definition, vaster than religions. Behold the travail of the ages, an eternal spiritual upward trend, the perpetual witness of a hope which the world itself cannot quench, the fountain of the peace which the world can never give.

This has happened. Call my faith in it, if you will, a sort of transcendentalism. Call it anything you like, but include in it your broadest understanding of history. Read into it the richness of your own experience, that we may feel the force of the questions to which it leads.

What does such a belief mean to the little child whom you will baptize, or begin to instruct? What matter to him, born on some ugly Main Street, this upward trend through aeons of time; of what moment to him the sayings of Jesus and the testimony of Christ-like men?

And whence came the child? From the moment he was conceiver, he began a physical development through the lower forms of animal life up to the human being. He is born with the marks of this animal travail on his body, yet he is born capable of thought, of acquiring an encompassing knowledge so vast that it transcends the earth and weighs the stars. He plans, he creates, he is capable of infinite development. A recent writer describes this travail. "Before I could lie on my mother's breast," she writes, "the earth had to be prepared, and the stars had to take their places, a million races had to die, testing the laws of life; and a boy and girl had to be bound for life to watch together for my coming. I was millions of years on the way, and I came through seas of chance, over the fiery mountain of law, by zig-zag path of human possibility. Such creatures of accident are we," the writer continues, "liable to a thousand deaths before we are born. But once we are here we can create our own world.....No cataclysm has the force to move me from my path.....Even life that was so difficult to attain may serve me merely as a wayside inn, if I choose to go on eternally. However I came here it is mine to be!"

What does childhood mean? It means this right to be. As his body has passed through many stages, so before he reaches maturity the child's mind must pass through the stages of man's intellectual history, must traverse great tracts of human experience. He is a barbarian, a tribesman, an iconoclast, a dreamer, until at last maturity is reached. The cycle of life runs swiftly on. He is a man, he labors, he loves, he grows old, he dies.

We witness a third development. As his body and his mind have been in transition, so his spirit also has been in process. Here is the miracle: his spiritual growth alone is capable of endless development. He is to determine the end of it as he himself shall choose. If he wills spiritual growth, nothing can debar him from it. He can become in reality a child of grace and an inheritor of heavenly things. He is heir to all the ages. What is the worth of the life to itself? And we answer, The hope that has sustained it.

Such is the worth of hope to the child, and he has a right to it. To cheat him with cant, with worldly learning, with riches of whatever kind, and leave him ignorant of hope eternal is to rob him of his birthright.

Further, what every man hopes for is of supreme importance not only for himself but for others.

Try to imagine an earth inhabited only by the children of eternal hope. Imagine it in all its implications. Would not all the partial things become whole, and the earth at last be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea? Two great tendencies in human life make for this ultimate consummation: the growing appreciation of our relation to the all enfolding mysteries, and the growing affiliation of men; love to God, and love to men. All the law and prophets still hang upon these two commandments, and here is our message.

We are confronted with a complexity of institutions, races, beliefs, practices, and among them the different habits of faith. Dare we apply our test to the churches? I freely confess to you that personally I judge all religious teaching by the quality of hope which it brings to individuals. A man who lives without hope is of all men the most to be pitied. I fear greatly for the hopeless life. It is most to be dreaded. And next to it I fear for the life that is arrested in its spiritual development. The lack of hope and the lack of spiritual development I dread as the monks of old feared the devil. It matters comparatively little where a man begins in faith. Only let him not deny the leading of the Holy Spirit of truth and he will be led onward and upward through partial intuitions and perceptions from glory ot glory. The lesser undertakings will give place to the more inclusive, the cloudy vision will grow more clear.

The life of God is too mighty, His dealings with men too manifold, for any one of us to find the only way. Let every man be true to himself, and take the highest he can discover. Let him be content with no arrested development. If he finds comfort and help in definitions which lack appeal to me, it concerns me little. We may both be right in an inclusiveness larger than either of us has fully grasped. What does concern me is that we both shall feed the world. Is there hope in our teachings, his and mine, is there enlargement, is there affirmation and not negation, is there what Carlyle called the everlasting yea? Does our teaching confirm the feeble knee and shelter the smoking flax so that the flame of hope shall burn? This is of supreme importance.

There is real danger that we miss this vocation by preaching abstractions, philosophies, subtle intricacies, and these will not be understood. Paul felt the temptation. There is still discussion about parts of his writings! But it was Paul who said he would rather be understood in the churches than to speak with tongues. And Paul taught of love that hopeth all things. Because of our very intelligence and wide interests I suspect that we free ministers are in peculiar danger of speaking with tongues. Certainly we shall do well to avoid the peril.

In passing, let me apply this statement to the diversity of theological interests in our fellowship. We hear of theological differences between men equally honest and honored in our ministry. I rejoice that we can abide in a loving spirit with differences of opinion about the heavenly mysteries. So far as I am aware no one wishes to dictate to me; so far as I can discern my own mind, I wish to dictate to no one. What we all desire is that hope be preached. If I preach not hope, than woe is me! If others preach not hope, their effort is vain. So long as we all preach hope, we shall be blessed.

And our hope will depend upon our belief in God. This belief lies in the realm not of definition, but of apprehension, of appreciation. We depend largely on intuition. The eye does not hear, nor the ear see. Many aspects of life the mind does not fathom. We reason about things largely after we apprehend them, we apprehend far more than we directly know. We know the danger of these facts. But let us here take

written his first book and who finds at once a publisher, a handsome advance in money return and a large amount of advertising for his work before its publication.

Mr. Kimball has called his novel by the indefinite and unattractive title of "Mrs. Merivale." There is certainly nothing about the name to attract the reader. The book will be published in August and of course will almost at once become a first seller. Its enduring qualities as a work of literary distinction is quite another matter. I am anxiously awaiting publication. The process by which it finally was put into print would establish a degree of merit.

The author is only thirty-four years of age. He was born in Chelsea Massachusetts and went through the Chelsea High School. He then went to Princeton where he came under the influence of Dean West. As soon as he was graduated he went to teaching in a preparatory school at Pomfret, Conn., where he found use for the Latin and Greek he had studied at Princeton. Then followed a brief experience in commercial life in a business house in Boston with which his father is connected and then came—the war. Mr. Kimball did not "get across" but he accumulated valuable experience in Camp Devens. After the war he went to teaching again in the Country Day school but he is through with teaching now. The desire to write is strong in him, and his initial success naturally will give him confidence to continue. The prize he won has not turned his head in the least. He is most modest about it, even shy, and the publicity involved seems somewhat of a bore. There is nothing to distinguish Mr. Kimball from any other young man who works with his head. He is of medium height, with short-cut wavy brown hair and blue eyes. He is slender and muscular and wears a fine coat of tan, the result of sun and water, for he spends as much time as he can spare swimming. About his eyes is a look of dogged concentration, which comes from the habit of persistence.

Writing does not come easy to him. In the article by Mr. Stow, and from which I am quoting freely, we are told that he found no inspiration in teaching which helps him in his work. He makes a first draft on a typewriter and works away till he gets stuck for the right word or phrase. Then after vain efforts to capture it he breaks away and goes swimming or to the gymnasium, and while he is gone usually the idea he is after comes to him and in very fine writing he sets down on any paper he may have handy the phrases that come. Then when he goes back to his typewriter the work goes smoothly.

'Mrs. Merrivale" was first written while he was teaching. It was started and then dropped for a considerable time. Then he took it up again and wrote at it for a year.

By that time it was twice as long as it is now. Then he dropped it again and after an interval began to rewrite it. Presently he got stuck and could do nothing with it for six months. Then he picked it up and it was finished in a month. It will be off the press in August according to the publisher, Edward J. Clode.

I predict that it will be the talk of the winter in book circles. We are informed thoat Mr. Kimball is not of that school of younger writers who would be in a seventh heaven if their works could be barred from the mails.

Because of the manner in which the book is brought into print it will be subjected to penetrating criticism. It will unquestionably have its ardent admirers and enthusiastic rejectors. Whatever the verdict I shall read the book. We will all await with anxious expectancy the penetrating voice of Mr. Mencken. From what I know of the man, his method and his ideals I look for Mr. Mencken to find it full of defects. I advise those who have a weakness for first editions to buy early.

—P. B.

only the good from them. We are mystics, daring to believe more than we can measure, more than the heart of man hath conceived, trusting ever in the triumph of hope. With Paul and Jesus we are bond servants of hope. Our whole free movement rightfully takes its place with the mystics. We are aware of infinitely more divinity than we ever can proclaim or ever define. Definitions of deity have their useful place, but what the world needs, and what we continually need, is the practice of the consciousness of God.

Let me give you my meaning in one familiar lyric expression:

"Av, now, when my soul all day
hath drunken the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time, and the trowel of trade is low,
(My) belief overshadows doubt, and I know that I know.
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great compass within,
(Like) the length and the breadth and the sweep of the marshes of Glynn.
As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest in the greatness of God:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod
I will heartily lay me ahold on the greatness of God."

Brethren, your task and mine is to build us a church on the greatness of God.

This Church of God is building, it forever exists transcendent, the the one holy, universal and catholic church of the spirit. In the name of this Universal Church I exhort and even dare command you: as you believe in God and fear Him, as you discern the divine in men and labor for its triumph as you would fulfil the high calling of God which you have taken upon yourselves, feed the world with hope eternal.

## *BOOK CHATS*

There are many people today, and not a few of them are educators, who speak most disparagingly of the value of the classical studies. Many of the best colleges and universities no longer require their students to take Latin and Greek. Every year more institutions of learning find it advisable to make Latin and Greek elective subjects. There is something to be said on both sides of this issue but just now an event of significance has taken place which scores for the classics.

Dean West of Princeton recently told Mr. Charles Messer Stow, the literary critic of distinction, some very sound arguments in favor of a classical training. Dean West said, "If people could only see the immense value classical studies have even in this life of ours today, they would pay more attention to them. The classics are not anachronistic. They are as much alive now as they ever were, and their lessons are particularly applicable in the civilization of this week in Boston, New York or Dallas." Dean West is substantiated in this viewpoint by the unusual achievement of one of his former pupils.

Paul Kimball who was graduated from Princeton in the Class of 1911 has just been awarded a prize of $2500 for the best novel submitted in a contest which attracted 6700 manuscripts. This recognition is all the more significant as the novel was Mr. Kimball's first production. When Mr. Kimball outlined his novel to Mr. Stow he frankly admitted that the humor it contained was instinctively based on that which he found in Petronius, Plautus and others of the ancient writers. Dean West is vindicated in his ideas. On the commercial side here is a young man who has

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## REGULAR EVENTS

**School of Religious Education**—Sundays, 9:30 a. m., Channing Hall.

**Woman's Club**—Every Monday, Program, Edgewater Beach Hotel. Departmental Meetings, Channing Hall.

**Men's Forum**—Second Monday evenings, Channing Hall.

**The Temple Club**—Second and fourth Tuesday evenings in Channing Hall.

**Church Trustees Meeting**—Second Monday evenings.

## CHURCH NEWS

August is the month of vacations and there is very little news available for the church. The various organizations are all having a resting spell and while committees and officers are busy on programs and plans for the fall there have been no public meetings. The program for the Woman's Club is nearing completion and will be published in full in the September number. The same is true of the Men's Forum, the School of Religious Education and the Temple Club.

The work on the Temple has been progressing steadily during the month. There is a great amount of money needed to meet the bills for labor and material as the work progresses. It is the desire of the building committee that all pledges be brought up to date and that new pledges be procured. The General Fund of the church is in need of funds and it is hoped that those who contribute during the church season to this fund will realize that there is need of money to keep the church functioning during the closed season. There are many expenses which do not stop with the closing of the church for the summer. The treasurer, Mr. Thos. Harrison, 4641 Sheridan Road will receive contributions at any time. Will you kindly make a "Vacation offering?"

The plans as they now appear call for the Dedication Service Sunday morning, October third, at ten forty-five. Dr. Bradley will preach the Dedication Sermon. The architect, Mr. W. E. O. Pridmore will present the keys to Mr. C. K. Anderson, president of the Board of Trustees. This will be an historical service in the life of our church and every member will want to attend.

Dr. and Mrs. Bradley, left their home on Black Duck Island, Tower, Minnesota, July 13th, for their Eastern trip. They returned August 12th. Dr. Bradley preached Sunday morning, July 25th in the First Parish Church Cohasset, Mass., a suburb of Boston. The church was built in 1747 and is one of the historical churches of New England. That same afternoon he preached in the First Church of Scituate. July 22nd and 23rd was spent on Cape Cod and in visiting historic Plymouth and Provincetown. July 26th was spent in quaint and picturesque Gloucester. On July 27th they arrived at Star Island, ten miles out in the Atlantic Ocean, off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. At Star Island is held the Summer Meetings of the Unitarians. The Unitarians own the island and it is the only island in the world exclusively used for religious activities. On Wednesday, July 28th Dr. Bradley began his course of lectures in Eliott Hall. He spoke on "Progress in Religion." July 29th on "Can We Outgrow Religion?" On July 30th "150 Years of Liberty." Sunday, August 1st he conducted a Communion Service in the old Gosport Stone Church on the Island which was built in 1800. At 10:30 he preached the annual sermon for the Alliance and at 5 in the afternoon gave a reading of Celia Thaxter's Poems. Celia Thaxter lived and is buried on Appledore Island, one of the Isles of Shoals group. To these islands came Lowell, Whittier, Hawthorne, and many of our great men and women of another generation. On August 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Dr. Bradley spoke every morning in the Old Stone Church. There is no place in America quite like these islands. Rocky and treeless they have a charm and personality indescribable. People are here from all over America. Dr. Bradley was delighted to meet the wife and daughter of the late Senator Mason of Illinois. The Masons live in Glen Ellyn and are members of our radio audience.

On the evening of July 30th the thirtieth anniversary of the Summer Meetings was held. This

fair also commemorated the tenth anniversary of the ownership of Star Island by the Unitarians.

Prof. Clayton Bowen of Meadville Theological Seminary is giving a course of lectures on the same program with Dr. Bradley.

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It is of interest to all religious liberals in Chicago and environs to know that beginning with the Fall term the Meadville Theological Seminary will begin its first year at the University of Chicago. For nearly a century this school has been located at Meadville, Pennsylvania. Some of the outstanding religious liberal preachers of America have been graduated from this school. The school is Unitarian in theology. It is certain that with the removal to Chicago a new era will begin for the seminary.

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Miss Meta Roth Brand, 1732 Chase Ave., for many years the treasurer of the Woman's Club is the guest of her sister at Springerville, Arizona, and a new nephew born July 1st.

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Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Crabb formerly of 2458 Wilson Ave., have moved to Milwaukee. They will be greatly missed in the church activities where they have been incessant workers for many years.

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Mr. and Mrs N. Wyeth, Lawrence Ave., are spending the summer at their summer home in Engleside. Mrs. H. R. Dalrymple and Mrs. J. J. Reynolds were recent guests from the church.

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The Woman's Club recently held a very successful evening card party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Winn, Lakewood Ave. Over one hundred dollars was cleared to be used for the work of the Club. Mrs. Philip Wahlman was in charge of the party arrangements.

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Mrs. Max Riley of 4756 Beacon St., has had as her guest for an extended visit Miss Elizabeth Williams of Beverly, Mass.

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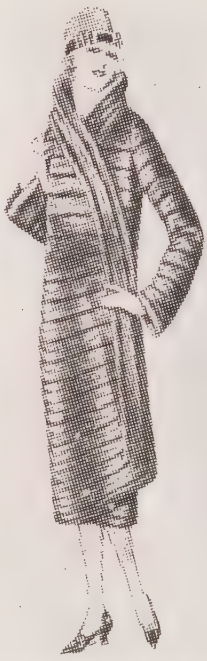

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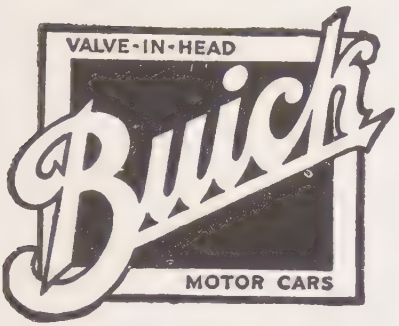


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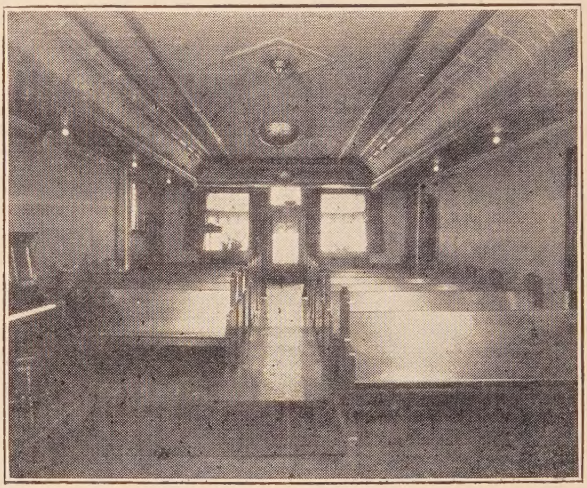

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